

The Democratic Party as it Was and as it Is!

SPEECH OF HON. TIMOTHY O. DAY,

OF OHIO,

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

APRIL 23, 1856.

Mr. DAY. Mr. Chairman, in the edifying fight, amid the din of clashing arms and the roar of artillery, when the murky clouds of heavenward-wreathing smoke become too dense for the fell work to go successfully on, there are lulls in the storm of human passion, to give breath to the combatants, and enable them to distinguish friend from foe. So, in the milder conflicts of the political arena, in the wordy war of debate and the thunder of the press, when a cloud of platforms obscures the field, it becomes necessary to have some pause, to examine the ground, to see what changes of positions have occurred—to study, decide, and fight on. To my mind, such a time is now upon us, and, for one, I frankly confess that I notice *some* changes which need explanations, and with which we can hope to have results explained. I propose only a cursory glance at the main points of the political battle-field for the last thirty years, to trace the growth of an interest which has embraced in its folds the Democratic party of the past, and made of it a huge workshop of new doctrines, resolves, and wire-drawn platforms.

Since the meeting of this House, during the struggle through which we passed in the election of a Speaker, and since, we have had many able disquisitions on Democracy, by those whose province it has been, in times past, to act as tutors; and we have also had some efforts in that line from pupils, whose rapid progress in their Democratic studies, if not a marvel to themselves, is so to some of us. I have listened to these harangues with some interest, satisfied that I had widely diverged from the old paths, or that lights unknown to the past had recently been discovered, which were patent to the few,

who, in the kindness of their hearts, were willing to illuminate the uninitiated. But my attention has been fruitless; either the pupil is too obtuse, or the teachers are not as acute as they should be. I see upon this floor members whose lives have been passed in battling against Democratic ideas and measures—members who have won for themselves laurels for forensic ability in furicous onslaughts on what they then deemed a Pandora's box of human evils—the Democratic party; members who can boast long years of scarred service in antagonism to Democratic principles and leaders, and who now speak of their affiliation with what *they* call Democracy, with all the staidness of old soldiers, instead of the blush of the new recruit. And I will do them the justice to say, that I believe they are consistent in all this; that their present position has not required for *them* any surrender of the past; that they now stand where they have always stood. In the recent dismemberment of parties, when the one they loved and cherished for its conservative qualities died of political marasmus, it left to the hot-headed, impetuous rival which had fought it long and gallantly, the dangerous legacy of its *interests*, and the care of an estate so encumbered and mortgaged, that, after a few years of painful struggles, it will end in the ruin of its possessors. The remains have been followed to their final resting-place by devoted servitors, whose dropping tears have been dried, and joy quickened in their heart, by the more than fraternal endearments of the special legatee of the dear defunct. Hence, the position of the gentlemen to whom I have alluded, and thousands elsewhere, throughout the length and breadth of our Republic, whose be-

lief in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls has been fully and joyfully realized.

It has been the pride of my life to rank myself as a Democrat; it is yet my boast, though not connected with the party which has the name, but not the soul, I venerate. We frequently hear allusions on this floor to ancestry—of the Cavaliers and Huguenots of the Old World; and, though I have but little of that description of veneration, I, too, can point to a Democratic ancestry, which may be equalled, but not excelled—where, from grandfather to grandson, no vote has been cast other than for Democrats for Presidents, from Thomas Jefferson down—down to Franklin Pierce. And now I find myself in antagonism to what is called the Democratic party; for, when it inherited its legacy of conservatism, it did not change its name, although it did its principles; and, like those of old who went into the wilderness, I am forced to wait for the smiting of the rock of the future, out of which is to gush the pure waters of principle, of which the people may drink and be made glad again.

No one can shut his eyes to the fact, that a great change has taken place within a very short period of time; that that party which, under Jefferson, was born to lead the vanguard of the Republican army against the conservatism of Federalism; which was assaulted at its birth for its heresies and its radicalisms, but which, like the infant Hercules, was too powerful to be crushed; which grew in strength and power, nurtured by clearly-defined principles of equal and exact justice to all; and which had the love of every heart not chilled by the icy breath of conservatism, drawing to itself all who had energy, talent, and soul, a desire to advance, and the nerve to act. This party *is* the Democratic party. For half a century, it was the star of hope for the oppressed everywhere; it *led* in every conflict with privileged power; it was the citadel and strength of every movement of the *people*. Under such a leader as Andrew Jackson, it dared to question the might of the greatest moneyed power our Republic has known; and in that contest, as in all others with conservatism, it came off victorious. When the *people* of Rhode Island, who had long suffered the loss of their inalienable rights, under a charter granted by a King, and used by conservatism to

prolong its power, wished to free themselves of their yoke, this party ranged itself on their side, though the means to be used were *revolutionary*. It proclaimed as its mission the enfranchisement of the oppressed, and it acted in consonance with its preachings. It was the radical, progressive, *revolutionary* party, opposed to the "law and order" of conservatism. Where is that party now? That great and glorious party of the past, with its living ideas, resolves, and bold deeds, is now, by the decease of its old antagonist, the inheritor of "law and order;" instead of being the party of the people, it is the party of privileged power. With one foot on the heel and the other on the head of the negro, it talks of nothing but "law and order." The lion of Democracy has become the jackal of Slavery.

When we see some wonderful phenomena of nature, the mind is naturally led to inquire the *cause*; and in human affairs we should not do less. Why is it that its bold, radical, and progressive policy has been abandoned, and the Democratic party become retrogressive and conservative? I have intimated death as one cause—the departure of the Whig party having left all the soul it had, conservatism, to enter the body of the Democratic party; but the great cause is, instead of being a party of one idea—progress, it has become a party of two ideas—Slavery and office. I know one-idea parties are deemed very reprehensible just now, but I would prefer such a party, if the one idea was a good one, to the party with two, and both bad.

In this connection, Mr. Chairman, I desire to trace, as briefly and succinctly as possible, the growth of one of the ideas now dominant with the so-called Democratic party—an idea which has frozen all the generous impulses that once found a home in that party, and which has made of it a receptacle of all that is selfish, all that is conservative. It is an idea that, like the frozen serpent placed by his hearth by the generous farmer, has been warmed by the genial rays of our Republican sun—strange contradiction!—and now threatens with its fangs the very life of Liberty itself. It is an idea which is ingrained in the most selfish passions of our nature, knowing no law but self—no rule but might. It was weak in the first days of the Republic, asking only for existence; now, it is bold and arrogant,

claiming the right to rule where it should always have been a stranger. It is this idea, its growth and present demands, which I wish to portray; and, though the colors will necessarily be sombre, the sketch will not be the less accurate.

At the time of the formation of the Constitution—the “organic law” of which we now hear so much, and which is so widely and differently construed—Slavery existed in twelve of the thirteen States that fashioned that instrument. Yet, with this preponderance of slave States, so well satisfied were the framers of that instrument of the evil tendencies of an institution which they felt to be out of place in their new-born Republic, that their first care was to prevent the further importation of slaves, and thus shut the door upon a rapid increase of that description of property. In the Constitution, the word “slave” was not allowed to intrude, either because the name then grated harshly on their ears, or that they felt that this anomaly should only exist tacitly and by sufferance for the time necessary for its total extinction. The Constitution was formed for all time; and, with their views, they did not dream but that their descendants would gradually and finally extinguish Slavery within the boundaries of the Republic. The contemporaneous history of that eventful period is plain, as to the opposition felt by our fathers on this subject; and their recorded work bears the impress of this feeling. They knew Slavery was a moral wrong, and they feared that it would become, what we, their descendants, see it, a political evil.

A few brief years passed away, and the rich alluviums of Louisiana, which commanded the mouth of the grandest river the world knows, attracted the attention of the then infant Republic. We had inherited one evil legacy in our separation from the mother country, and now an addition was to be made to it by her ancient rival, France. Slavery existed in the Territory of Louisiana, as it exists everywhere, in defiance of justice and right; and, in addition to that, it existed there in defiance of positive law. The representatives of that “reign of terror,” as it is fashionable to call it—when the crumbling throne of one of the most ancient of the monarchies of Europe had gone down in a sea of blood—when the crimes of a thousand years were revenged by an exasperated

people—the representatives of that people did not forget, in their own enfranchisement, that there were those across the broad Atlantic who groaned in slavery. In 1794, the Constitutional Assembly of France passed an act of enfranchisement, declaring all free within her colonies, of which Louisiana was one; but the hurried events of that period, the great distance of the colony from the mother country, and the speedy sale of it to our Republic, prevented the fruition of the benevolent intentions of those legislators of the “reign of terror.”

From this acquisition we may date the change in the republican policy of our Government. The fertility of its soil, and its applicability for the growth of cane and cotton, for which unfortunately the slave has the reputation of being peculiarly adapted, made this territory the real nucleus of American Slavery. It shut up the road to the extension of the Western boundary of the free States, and paved the way for the famous Compromise, over the repeal of which this nation is now convulsed, from its centre to its extremest points. Beyond the great Northwest was a still further West, and in this broad domain, acquired from France, it was claimed that Slavery existed by “organic law.” This bold assumption of a most dangerous dogma—one that has not its parallel except in the days of the Wambas, when the vassals of the barons of the Old World were held in feudal bondage, though they did wear white skins—this assumption, I say, from the very boldness with which it was urged, was acquiesced in by what it is now fashionable to call the “aggressive North.”

Another of the crumbling tyrannies of Europe soon wanted our gold, and we got in exchange the peninsula of Florida, and the Slave Power got an accession to its rapidly-growing boundaries. In both these instances, the strange fact was presented, of a Republic purchasing Slavery from enslaved nations across the Atlantic; and, with the isolated exception of California, no acquisition of territory made since the foundation of our Republic has added to the strength or to the boundaries of the free States. True, Iowa has been carved out of the Territory of Louisiana; but how, and for what equivalent, I will soon examine.

At the time of the acquisition of Louisiana, seven of the original thirteen States

were either free, or had taken the initiatory steps towards freedom from African Slavery; and the admission of Louisiana made the free and slave States equal in number. Now commenced the famous system of equilibrium, in which Slavery and Freedom were made to jog along, *pari passu*, in the fear that, if the former became stronger in the councils of the nation than the latter, the future would not redeem the hopes of the far-seeing statesmen of the South. With the immense accession of slave territory, as furnished by France and Spain, began to dawn the ambition of a power which, up to that time, had been humble in its pretensions, the demands of which we of the present day can fully comprehend. Hence the policy, which was steadily pursued during thirty years of the Republic, from 1820 to 1850, which I have denominated as the system of equilibrium. No more single births were to be allowed; the order of Nature was disturbed, to keep an equilibrium. Twins, one black and one white, were placed into the arms of the Republic at each accouchement of the Territories—Maine and Missouri, Arkansas and Michigan, Florida and Wisconsin, Texas and Iowa. Thus were four pairs of twins born, and the country went on in its quiet, plodding way, never dreaming but that it was all the result of the natural law of population, until the Mexican war laid open the wealth of gold discovered in California. The citizens of the free States rushed across the plains to this new Ophir in such numbers, that, before the ever-watchful statesmen of the South had prepared for the event, the State of California was knocking at the door of the Union for admission. Here was a dilemma! The South had got so accustomed to the twin system, that this threatened single birth threw it into a fit of consternation. The equilibrium was about to be destroyed; and we all remember the struggle of 1850, when, instead of twins, we got an "omnibus" load, not of States or equilibriums, but of equivalents. The most learned political midwives of that period of our Republic were in consultation, how to remedy the threatened evil; California would not wait; the free spirit of her sons was unaccustomed to the restraints and delays needed to keep the twin equilibrium perfect. California was determined to be born, and the midwives were compelled to assent to what they could not prevent. *Salutem*. But the mother must be saved

from the danger of such a violent birth; and all kinds of opiates were administered in one general prescription, labelled *compromise*.

Ah! what did that birth of California, because it was a free one, not cost the North—the "aggressive North?" Better that it had come into the Union as a slave State, than that the chalice, filled with bitterness, should have been put to the lips of the North! Her statesmen forgot that there is at least one thing in this world dearer than peace—honor; one thing more sacred than the Union—Liberty. They consented to a law, at which the self-respect of every freeman of the North rebels, and they compromised the manhood of the North to "preserve the Union." A free State, made so by the sons of the North, who loved Freedom because they had been nurtured with its great truths, asked admission into this Republic, and it was met at the threshold by delays and denials. It was enough to arouse the whole North, to make it stand upon its reserved rights, and to demand instead of supplicating; yet its statesmen forgot their duty, and compromised instead of acting. And yet, gentlemen from the South say that the North is "aggressive;" that we who represent Freedom are arrogant in our demands; that the South has suffered much for the sake of the Union. I wish it were so; I wish I could shut my eyes to the fact, that that North, which is my home, where my life has been passed, and whose institutions I love, has been true to its honor and dignity in the councils of this Republic. But it is not so.

Mr. Chairman, I have thus rapidly sketched the growth of one of the two ideas which I said constituted the present Democratic party. I have purposely omitted any details of the Missouri Compromise, because it is "a twice-told tale," and because I have no love for the word. Our fathers trusted to the honor of the South, and entered into a compact which should have been sacred. For its violation I do not hold the descendants of those with whom they made the agreement as entirely responsible, although I think they forgot the ancient chivalry in the modern love of power; but for those of the North who, from the lust of ambition, forgot that their first duty was to their country and its free institutions, history has its page, upon which will be written, in

imperishable letters, "It would have been better for the Republic, had these men never lived."

Until 1844, the one idea I have just traced had not openly appeared as a political power. It had been content to reap the advantages accruing from the national ambition of our people for acquisition of territory, for all the additions made to our domains gave the prospective advantage to Slavery. The North, instead of being extended, had submitted to curtailment. In 1844, the one idea appeared at Baltimore as a political power, and the wisest of Democratic statesmen, a man who was imbued with the true spirit of Democracy, and would not surrender it at the bidding of the one idea—I mean Martin Van Buren—was beaten for the nomination of President. The free North was for him, because it felt that he had been struck down in 1840 unjustly, and because he was a true and tried statesman. The slave South was against him, because he had opposed the acquisition of Texas, a slave State. The memorable two-thirds rule was passed, and the will of a majority defeated. From that year, we date dough-facism; from that year, the decadence of the principles of Democracy, which were replaced by the other idea, which I have said constituted one of the pair now named the Democratic party. From the time of Jefferson, the Democratic party had suffered but two reverses. It was the dominant party of the Republic; its principles commanded the support of the masses of the people, because of their truth and justice; and the one idea saw in that organization the means of permanent advantages; and, like Delilah of old, with its lures and wiles of office, it has shorn this modern Samson of his strength.

In 1848, another Northern statesman sought a nomination for the Presidency. Warned by the fate of Mr. Van Buren, he wrote a letter, conceding to the South, not all it demanded, but enough to pave the way for hope, and as his reward he received the nomination he sought. But a more reliable man for the South was his opponent in the election; and the one idea, true to itself at all times, gave its support to the candidate who had interests identical with its own. Thus, two Northern statesmen—men renowned for their attachment to the principles of Democracy—were struck down; one for nomination, because he was still true to the

doctrines of the father of the church; the other in the election, because the one idea had not received an obeisance low enough; and because a slaveholder was his opponent.

The ever-memorable and accidental administration of Fillmore, during which the single birth, attended with so much trouble, took place, so disgusted the people of the North, that they visited a terrible vengeance upon the party he was supposed to represent. In the nominations and elections of 1852, the one idea was on the side of the popular party; and from the advent of the present Executive we may date the exact and close union of the two ideas—Slavery and office. This union needed some striking solemnities, to inaugurate it in the minds of the people—some monument to perpetuate its political strength—by showing what two ideas can do in the councils of a nation. The Kansas bill was passed—a compact was broken—a majority of Representatives were reduced to a minority—rules of legislation were violated; and in defiance of the popular will, in defiance of right, justice, and public faith, two ideas ruled and rioted in the plenitude of their power. And yet, the North is "aggressive." I wish it were so! Far better would it be that the North, representing, as it does, the true spirit of our Government—life, action, and freedom—should be aggressive, than to be what it has been, tame, timid, and compromising. A world of trouble would have been saved to the future; for the harvest is sown, and the crop will be gathered.

And we, who have passed our lives in the Democratic party—we, who have given the best proof in our power of our sincere love of principle, in refusing to recognise a party in which the lust of office is allied with the evil of Slavery, as the Democratic party of Jefferson—we are told by this party of two ideas that we are not Democrats. I am not choicé about names; they have too often been the means of deceit; and while I am sure that I hold to the principles of the past, party designations are all of but small moment. We all know, that what was Democratic at the North eight years ago is not so now; at least, we who hold to the old faith are denounced by our political doctors as traitors, and read out of the church as schismatics and heretics, beyond the pale of hope.

Just six years ago, as the editor of a

Democratic organ, I used the following language in its columns, and it was then good Democracy:

"What does the South want? Her rights in the Territories? She has them. Her citizens are as free to go with their wives and children, their wagons and horses, as the citizens of the North. Will that not satisfy the South? Has she some peculiar right which the North does not possess, and does not wish? Has she the right to take into free Territories a species of property which the free labor of the North regards as a pestilence, and which it knows to be its natural enemy? Most certainly not. There is a right stronger than that claimed by the South—the natural right of man. It is a right which overrides all others. It is omnipotent, irresistible. It acknowledges an equal right, but no superior. It goes hand in hand with its equal, but not with the slave. It breathes and lives in the pure air of Freedom, and suffocates in the atmosphere of Slavery. It only asserts the great principle of life—that of self-preservation—when it says, the fertile plains and smiling valleys of our new lands *shall be free*. If the South is content with Slavery where it now exists, we are. All we ask is, that it shall remain where it is."

This was Ohio Democracy in 1850. The resolutions of its State Conventions breathed the same unmistakable language, and under this banner of non-extension we marched on to victory as the Democratic party. But the party repudiated its platform, and the Democracy of Ohio have repudiated the party. In 1854, when a majority of eighty thousand of the people of Ohio repudiated the Kansas bill, the nominees of the present Democratic party did not dare to breast the storm, but preached that act as the great charter of Freedom—as an act that was to make all the States hereafter to be admitted free; but the people would not believe them—they loved the old Democracy better than the new.

And of what is the present Democratic party composed? I have shown that it has two ideas, and in the nature of things, with two such elements, the collection must be incongruous. From extreme radicalism, it has gone over to extreme Hunkerism. It is now the conservative, Federal party of the Union; and, instead of being the rollicking, dashing party of the past, full of revolutionary designs, it is now staid and quiet, and talks very demurely of *law and order*. It has gathered to itself the conservatism of the North and of the South; and with the specious cry of "popular sovereignty" it seeks to march to victory. Kansas stands as a living monument of the kind of "popu-

lar sovereignty" the one idea would concede to the North; and the support it receives from the other idea shows exactly what the people have to hope from the union of them both. It is precisely the "popular sovereignty" the present perjured usurper of France permitted its people to have after the *coup d'état*, by which he won his way to a throne through blood and carnage: if you vote as directed, you can vote—if not, not. A slave State, Missouri—one of the twins of 1820—fears the effect upon her property if a free State is formed on her border, and her citizens regulated the "popular sovereignty" of Kansas. A Legislature, thus chosen, passed laws which must disfranchise every emigrant from the free States, yet we must have "law and order;" and the party of two ideas, claiming to be the same that stood by the freemen of Rhode Island in their revolution—the same that trampled upon a law of my State, dividing the county I represent into two election districts, revolutionary resistance to which gave political prominence to one of the Senators from Ohio, now loudest in his love of "law and order;" this party of two ideas tells the people of this Republic, that these laws, which insult the intelligence of freemen, must be obeyed. If they are enforced—if the freemen who have gone to Kansas to make free homes for themselves and their children are forced to bite the dust, by submitting to those iniquitous laws, let it be written of them, as was done by the conqueror of the beautiful capital of Poland, when from its smoking ruins, amid its silent streets and enslaved people, surrounded by the tinselled manikins of tyranny, he proclaimed, "Order reigns in Warsaw."

Let me say here to those who represent the Democracy of the South, not the new recruits, but the old soldiers, You are trying a dangerous experiment upon the Democracy of the North. As a law-abiding and compact-keeping people, they will favorably compare with you and yours; and their party attachment has been proven by their patient endurance for the past twelve years. They have seen their cherished statesmen struck down on the battle-field, because they would not surrender the convictions of their lives, or degraded because they did. They have borne all this, because they loved the party, the portrait of which I

have drawn. They loved it, because of the perils and dangers through which they had passed with it; they loved it for its birth, its youth, its manhood; do not make them curse it for its old age. The North has its education; it is that of equality; it is natural that its people should be opposed to Slavery; they have been taught that the Constitution recognised Slavery only where it existed, and they are opposed to its extension. The force of party attachment, the habitude of a life, may draw the support of the old soldiers to the party which has the name they know, but the young and thinking minds are being lost to you. No party, with "law and order" as its motto, and the extension of human Slavery as its design, can flourish at the North. Our people would have to unlearn the teaching of their schools, the imprints of their natures would have to be changed, before they could enroll themselves in such a party.

You have brought your cherished institution into the political arena; you have submitted it to the resolves of Conventions and the keeping of a party. Flushed with your triumphs, with an unsated ambition for dominion and power, you grasp boldly. The Kansas bill, and its known fruits, you hail as victories; but have you thought of the heart-burnings, the disaffection, the mortifications, it has caused at the North? Brave and loyal hearts have quit, in disgust, a party in which they could not preserve their self-respect. At my home, I know men whose support would be an honor to any cause—men whose lives have been passed in the thickest of the fight, battling for Democratic truths—men of brain, representative men, honest men—who are not now of you, nor with you, in this fight. These men could bear with your infirmities for the good of their party; but your ambition has left them no alternative. They are now isolated—acting with no organization, standing aloof, the memory of the past yet exercising its potent influence. But this cannot last. Such men must act; they have principles, talent, influence; and they are subtle tools in the hands of workers. In your race of ambition, do not over-teach yourselves. "Beware! behind you stalks the headsmen!"

There is a limit beyond which it is not safe to go. We of the North are taunted as being foes of the Union, and hear daily threats from the South of a dissolution of

the national compact, if any of the laws passed by Congress where the negro is concerned are repealed. The counsels of the Father of his Country are invoked, to show us that Liberty itself is not as dear as the existence of the Union. He was a great and good man! and he did leave in his last will and testament food for the reflection of those who claim to be his testamentary legatees. Let me quote from that instrument, which of all others more clearly shows the workings of a man's heart, the will of Washington:

"Upon the decease of my wife, it is my will and desire that all the slaves whom I hold *in my own right* shall receive their freedom. To emancipate them during her life would, *though earnestly wished by me*, be attended with such insuperable difficulties, on account of their intermixture by marriage with the *dower* negroes, as to excite the most painful sensations, if not disagreeable consequences, to the latter, while both are in the occupancy of the same proprietor—it *not being in my power, under the tenure by which the dower negroes are held, to manumit them.*" * * "And I do, moreover, most pointedly and most solemnly enjoin it upon my executors, hereafter named, or the survivors of them, to see that this clause respecting slaves, and every part thereof, be *religiously* fulfilled at the epoch at which it is directed to take place, *without evasion, neglect, or delay.*"

We have frequent extracts from Washington's Farewell Address, warning us against sectional divisions; but if those who quote them had only a tithe of the spirit breathed in the foregoing clause of his posthumous farewell of earth, we should have no occasion for his warnings. His opinion of Slavery, as a moral wrong, is evinced clearly in the quotation I have made; and if his example had been followed, it would never have become the great political wrong it now is. But with the one idea, as a moral wrong, I do not choose to meddle, further than to show to those who are so loud in their denunciations of those who do not agree with them that Slavery is a divine institution, that the Father of his Country taught us differently. It is as a political wrong that we of the North *wish* to deal with that institution, leaving to those States which have it all its blessings. We do not envy them its possession; we do not ask them to divide it with us; we say to them, "If it is meet and good in your eyes, *keep it.*" With it, as a political wrong, we have the right, and it is our *duty*, to deal. We have our interests as well as the South; and it is our interest to see that free labor

is not supplanted by slave. We believe this to be a Democratic Union, where the majority is to determine, under the organic law, the destination of this Republic. It cannot possibly be admitted that a minority, under the pretext of a right which is a huge and monstrous wrong, shall rule the majority, and shape our Government to its own purposes and interests. To permit this, is to not only abnegate our rights, but also to refuse to do our duty. It is folly to say that it is no concern of ours, whether Slavery goes to the Territories or not—that we have free States, and that should content us—while the one idea, steadily and persistently, attends to its own propagation and extension. The political power of this Republic must be the reflex of some principle; and it is essential, if we wish to preserve the spirit of our Government, that that power should be the representative of the thrift, prosperity, and energy, of the free States. We are told that our claim to this is not well founded; and we have an array of figures, almost incomputable, representing, in current coin, the value of some millions of human chattels. At the North, we have no such values; but we have the energy which springs from a laudable hope—the skill which emanates from free minds.

It is a question of vital importance to the labor of the North, whether our Territories shall be carved out into free States, or not. It is a question of interest—it is a question of life itself. Even now we are told, among the new heresies preached by the one idea—and that, too, by distinguished Democrats of the South—that it is better for labor to be owned than to be employed; that, at the South, labor has no unquiet contests with capital, because there capital owns labor. And these insulting arguments are addressed to the people of the North, where labor is proud of its independence, and jealous of its rights. There seems to be no limit to the assumptions of the one idea; it claims rights which are wrongs; it threatens to subvert our Government, if its Democratic theory of a majority rule is put in practice; and now it dares to compare its system of slave labor with that of the toilers of the North. I ask the mechanics, the laborers of the North, to mark the progress of events, to lay to their hearts these taunting declarations, and then remember that every slave State added to this Union gives power to those who think that labor is benefited by being owned.

And, as a counterpoise to all these dogmas, assumptions, and clutching ambition, the "rights of the South" stun our ears and bewilder our senses. Why, *Slavery has no rights*; it is a thing of suffering and suffering, and is a denial of all right. The North has yielded to the South the suffering to hold slaves; but it will never consent that what it believes to be a wrong shall be made a pestilence, with which the free Territories of the Republic shall be overwhelmed. If it was only a contest for political power, the North would be untrue to its duties, did it permit the extension of Slavery; but as it is a question of interest, the Kansas bill has "sown dragon's teeth, which will spring up armed men!" The challenge is accepted; it is not a fight of one campaign; it will take many, but the result cannot be doubted.

Mr. Chairman, we live in an eventful period;

the next five years are to be decisive ones in the destiny of this Republic. We are hurrying forward to an era in our political history which is to shape our course, for good or evil, for a long future. We have seen the Republic turned widely from the path in which its founders believed it would tread; we have seen what they considered a *wrong* converted into an exciting and aggressive *right*. It is for us of the North—we who are willing to abide by the doctrines of the fathers of the Revolution—to at least make the attempt to right these wrongs. Are we to be told that Slavery is the equal of Freedom, and its rights to the territory the same, and not denounce the heresy? Shall we listen to the assertion, that the flag of which we are so proud, and under which Liberty was won, carries Slavery in its folds wherever it floats, and not blush with shame? Are we to know that the only use and purpose of this Union to the one idea is, that it protects and extends Slavery, and assent to such a use of it? We have had enough of timidity at the North: one of the great parties of the Union has died, because it was afraid to live, and the other has abandoned its principles because it was afraid to die. The two ideas, Slavery and office, are marshalling their hosts for the conflict, and it is time that an opposing idea—Freedom of our Territories—was gathering its forces for the battle it cannot avoid with honor, and with which it cannot fail to be victorious. Let us be true to ourselves and to those who are to follow us. Remember—

"We sow the golden grain to-day,
The harvest comes to-morrow."

But, to make the future what it should be, willing hearts are needed. The cold breath of personal ambition, grasping for the power won by the triumph of pure principles, will wither the fruit before it is ripened. History is full of the wrecks of ruined nations, whose people sought and won Freedom only to lose it under leaders who knew no higher purpose of life than the vain ambition to win power, position, a name, even at the cost of the Liberty of a trusting people. We have enough of brawling patriotism—the noisy declamation of poor earth-worms, who crawl through mire to gain what they seek—but of honest devotees, of unselfish laborers, alas! Liberty has but few! The warring antagonism between Liberty and Despotism, the rude jousts between Right and Might, which fill the pages of history with the romance of life, furnish to the thinker the solution of the causes of man's failure to be free. The earth-born ambition of the few has wrecked the hopes of the people in every struggle of which we have a record. To us, who have a mission and a time never before accorded to man, this fact should sink deep in our hearts—chastening, cleansing, and ennobling. The short cycle of human existence makes but a shadowy mark upon the roll of Time; and he who fills his brief hour with his own selfish plottings, though he may win a page in history, has lost the divinity of his nature in the sordid meanness of the mere man. With a just cause, an honest people, and unselfish leaders, our wildest dreams of man's advancement might become sober truths; but to be but one link of this myopic chain, and all is lost. In the language of one of the master minds of our age, "What State could fall, what Liberty decay, if the zeal of man's noisy patriotism were as pure as the silent loyalty of a woman's love!"

Mr. Chairman, I have finished my task. If what I have spoken shall awaken a thought in one brain, or make one pulse quicker with a purer love of the cause of truth and humanity, I will be more than repaid. If I fail to do either, I have left, as my own reward, the pleasing consciousness of a duty performed.